

PréHab'O : Enhancing the care pathway and quality of life for elderly cancer patients in remote areas of Réunion Island – Pilot Project

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INTRODUCTION

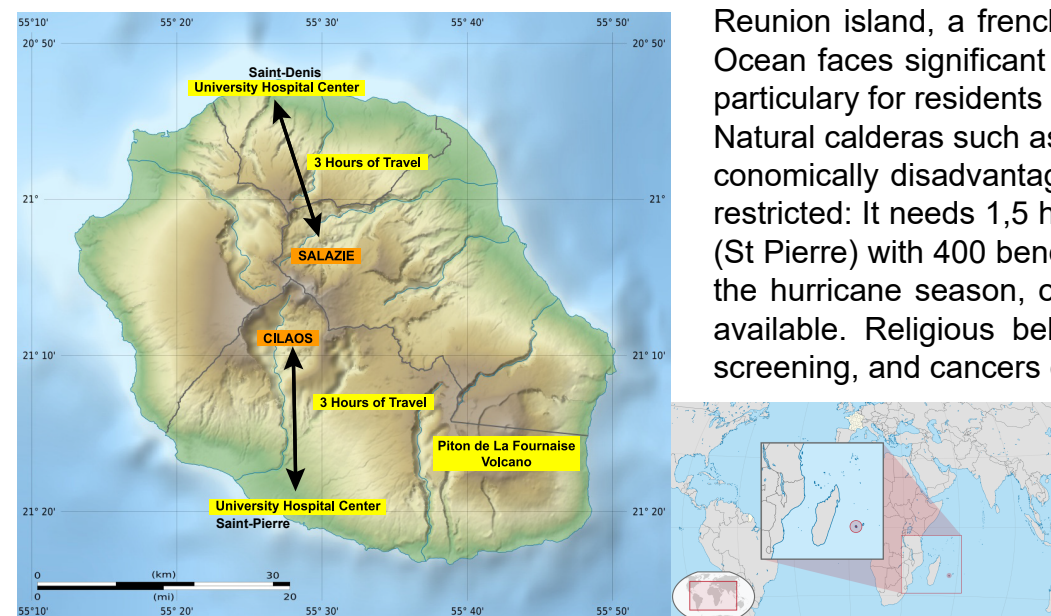


Figure 1 : Réunion Island, in the southwest of the Indian Ocean

Reunion island, a french overseas territory in the southwestern Indian Ocean faces significant disparities in access to supportive cancer care particularly for residents of remote mountainous regions. Natural calderas such as Cilaos and Salazie represent the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas where access to hospital is severely restricted: It needs 1,5 hour to go at the University Hospital in the south (St Pierre) with 400 bends. The road can be cut off by landslides during the hurricane season, or by roadworks. Public transport is not always available. Religious beliefs, illiteracy and social precariousness limit screening, and cancers can be diagnosed in advanced stages.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

- Describe the design and implementation of the PréHab'O pilot project
- Describe and analyze the perspectives on patients' quality of life based on the narratives of healthcare professionals and participating patients

METHODS

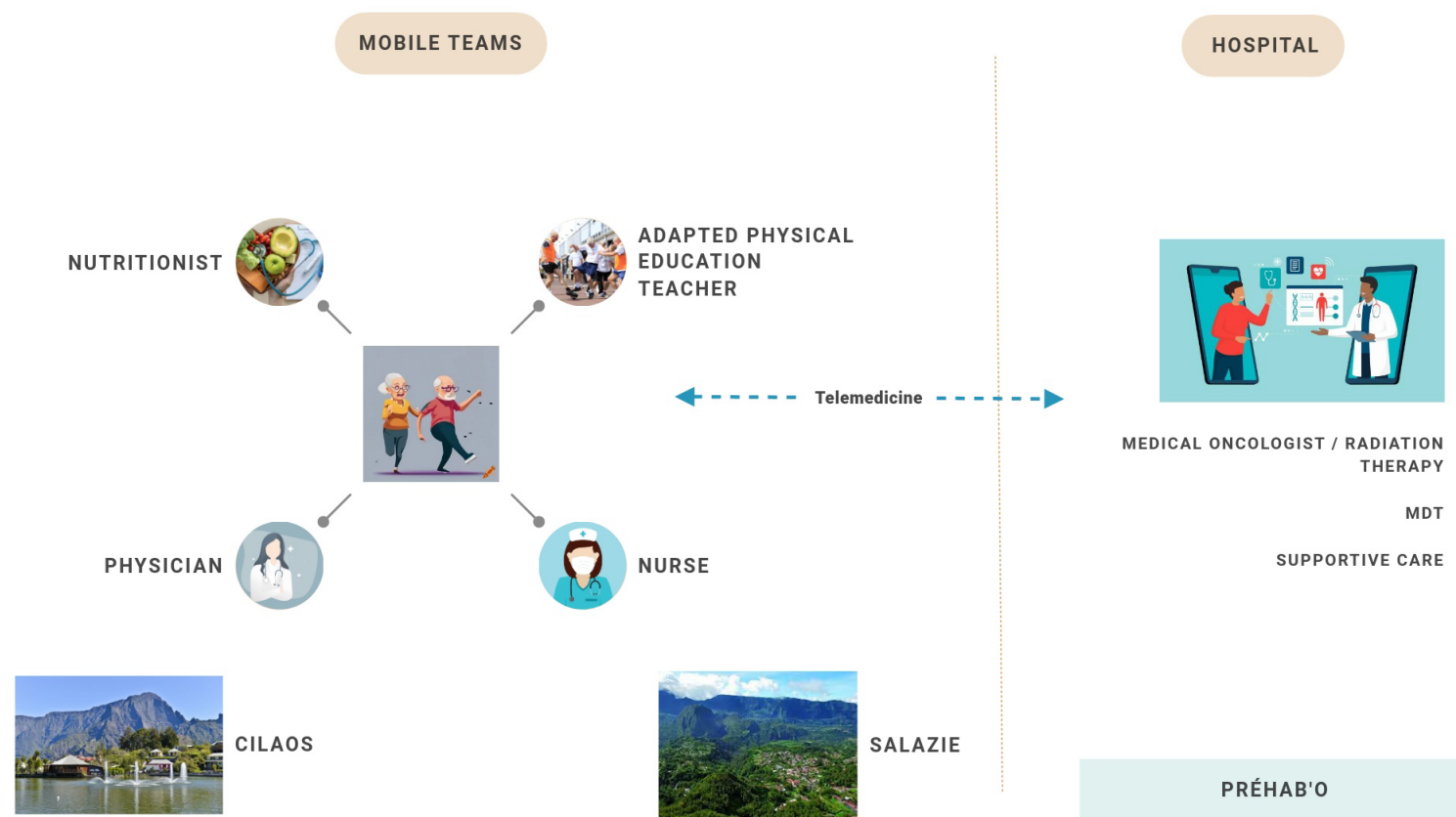


Figure 2 : Model of the PréHab'O Pilot Project

- Our pilot study Prehabilitation for Onco geriatric Patients (PréHab'O) started in March 2025 in Cilaos for 18 months. It integrates telemedicine and optimized care pathways to prepare individuals over 65 for major cancer surgery or chemotherapy.
- **Multimodal intervention:** the program will deploy G8 and G-Code screening tools and offer culinary workshops alongside group physical activity sessions aimed at improved well-being, confidence and social interaction.
- **Quantitative variables studied:** Weight, BMI, Heart rate, albumin, ADL, IADL, Time up and go test, SPPB and Walking speed.
- **Qualitative variables:** Patient adherence to program and weekly return. Semi-directive interview guide to assess improvement in patients' quality of life and satisfaction at the end of the program.

RESULTS

It's a pilot project: new organization and innovative method for meeting a need to bring supportive oncology care for which we are starting to get some qualitative results: feasibility, adherence by patients and questioning practices (local caregivers as well as hospital staff)

• Benefits of the PréHab'O pilot project for participating patients

o Facilitating access to care :

« It's the doctor and their team who come to see us here, in our community. We no longer need to go to the hospital. » (Interview 1) « It's much easier for me to go to the hospital in Cilaos than to travel down to St Pierre. It makes me feel better. » (Interview 2)

o Facilitating treatment adherence :

« You came all the way here to take care of us. That gives me confidence to take care of myself. I want to thank you. » (Interview 1) ; « At first, I was hesitant to come, but now that I've seen everything you're doing, I trust you » (Interview 4)

o Socialising and breaking isolation :

« It feels good to see and be with other people who are also sick like me, and to see the doctor as well. [...] I feel supported. » (Interview 4) « It's not good to be alone with your illness, that's why I think it's great that they've brought us together here. » (Interview 3)

• Barriers to the PréHab'O pilot project for participating patients

o Transportation and mobility issues :

« I will only come if an ambulance or a family member can bring me here. » (Interview 1)

o No barriers :

« I have no problems at all, everything is perfect. It needs to stay this way." (Interview 2) ; « Thank you for everything you are doing for us. I only see positive things. » (Interview 4)

• Suggestions for improvement proposed by participating patients

o Increase the frequency and duration of the intervention :

« Come every week. » (Interview 3) « Have one group in the morning and another in the afternoon, so we can have a choice [...] I would like the cooking workshop to last longer, that way we can eat for longer too (laughs). » (Interview 4)

o Offer other workshops :

« I would like to suggest dance and sewing activities. » (Interview 2)

• Limitations of the PréHab'O pilot project from the healthcare team's perspective

o Weather and geographical challenges :

« A cyclone delayed the start of the implementation of our pilot project. » (Interview 5)

o Organizational constraints :

« The travel time and the difficult road to Cilaos can be limiting. » (Interview 6) « Regarding the cooking workshop, you have to plan ahead for purchasing and selecting ingredients. It has to be done the day before or the same morning. The cooking activity depends a lot on the availability of products and the season. » (Interview 7)



Figure 3 : Cooking workshop respecting the cultural dimension of the patients

CONCLUSIONS

PréHab'O seeks to enhance patient selection for appropriate oncology treatment, tolerance and quality of life and decrease anxiety, depression and isolation. This pilot project is enabling us to think about a new way of organizing care, using telemedicine to reduce the number of transports, improve care coordination and reach out to isolated populations in geographically remote areas, where University Hospital Center healthcare professionals (nurses, dieticians, adapted physical activity teachers) go beyond the hospital walls for collective workshops. Positive response from Cilaos liberals and the users' collective to break this isolation. Collaboration with partner patient associations and territorial professional health community for breast cancer prevention actions in April 2025. Cooking and cancer workshop with a Chef to restore the pleasure of eating and share a moment of conviviality in June. Relying on a local, multidisciplinary mobile oncogeriatric team, this project aims to fill the gaps in supportive oncology care and improve outcomes for patients on Reunion Island. **Upcoming** : deployment of the second team to Salazie in eastern Réunion Island.

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DISCOVER THE PROJECT IN MOVIE



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